

Climbing the Trust & Credibility Food Chain Lessons From the SR 82 Rock Fall Project

June 9, 2005

Climbing the Trust & Credibility Food Chain

- Friends of Highway 82
- Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum
- Southeast Arizona Land Trust
- ADOT & Hwy 82 Rock fall Team
 - Aztec Engineering
 - EcoPlan
 - Fil Chavez
 - Citizen Volunteers of Sonoita/Elgin & Patagonia
- Haley & Aldrich
- McDaniel Lambert



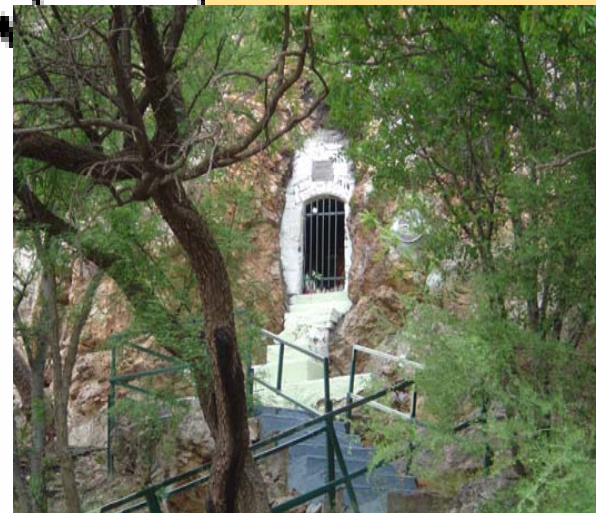
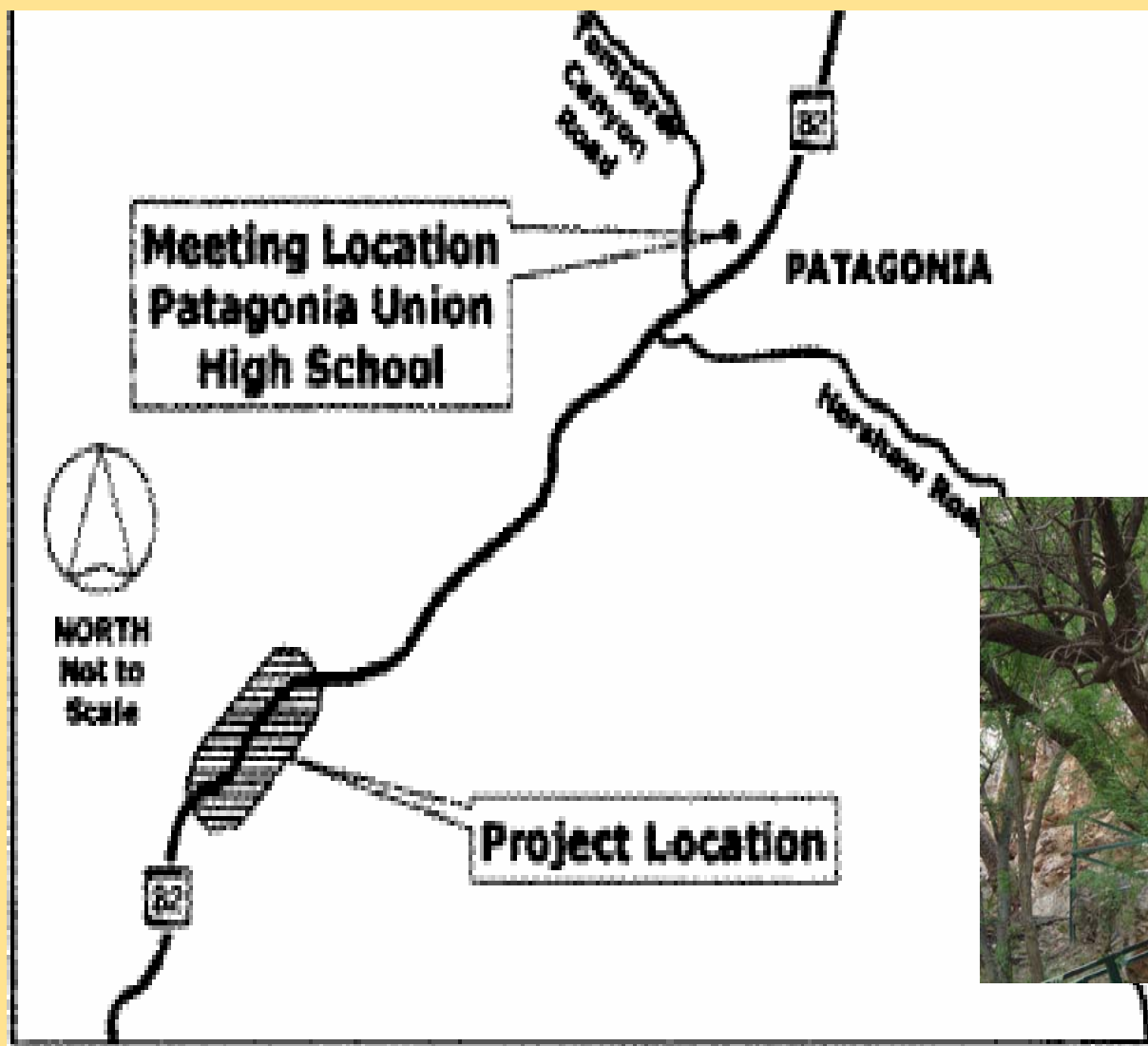
Community Impact Assessment Workshop – June 9, 2005

- Background
- Recap of the Events
- How Did This Get This Way?
- How to Fix It
- Lessons Learned





Background



- Southeastern Arizona
- Scenic Byway
- TNC Preserve
- Birding Hotspot
- Very Active
Community
 - ASARCO Land Exchange
 - Sierra Grande Land Exchange
 - Public Power of NM



Downtown Patagonia – Main Street



Downtown Patagonia – Main Street



Downtown Patagonia – Main Street



Patagonia Rail Depot



Telles Family Shrine





Recap of Events



Recap of Events

- December 8, 1999 – “Public Information Meeting”
Held in Patagonia - Cady Hall
 - Rock Fall Mitigation Project Introduced
 - Community Input Solicited
 - Project Criteria Presented
 - Alternatives Presented
 - “Agency Preferred” Alternative was perceived to have significant impacts to the environment
 - Hostile Reception & Inception of “Outrage”



Recap of Events

- April 5, 2000 – “Public Information Meeting”
Held in Patagonia - Cady Hall
 - Rock Fall Mitigation Project Re-Introduced
 - Community Input Solicited
 - Project Criteria Presented
 - Alternatives Presented
 - “Agency Preferred” Alternative was perceived to have significant impacts to the environment
 - Really Hostile Reception & Reinforcement of Community “Outrage”

Recap of Events



- Starting in the Spring of 2000
 - Citizen Letters Started Pouring into:
 - Assistant District Engineer
 - District Engineer
 - State Engineer
 - ADOT Director
 - County Supervisors & Other Elected Officials
- The storm clouds of community outrage had spilled out of Cady Hall all the way to Phoenix



Recap of Events

- Summer of 2000 Mediator Engaged by ADOT
 - Fil Chavez Takes on a Tough Job
- September of 2000 – SR 82 Rock Fall Study Team Formed
 - Develop Trust (this wasn't easy)
 - Lots of facilitation required (even the facilitator wasn't trusted – at first)
 - Develop Credibility
 - Development of Common Language & Shared Concerns
 - True Communication of Risk & Community Values

Recap of Events

- September 2000 through May 2001- the SR 82 Rock Fall Study Team
 - Met as a team 11 times
 - Identified 17 project alternatives
 - Reduced the 17 to 3 for in depth evaluation of engineering, environmental, social and economic impacts
 - Presented team findings and recommended alternatives to the community on May 29, 2001
- Environmental Assessment and FONSI signed on December 3, 2003





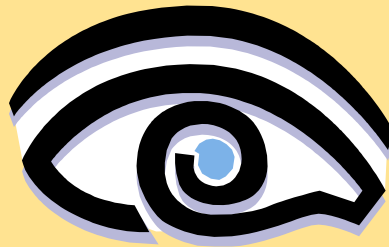
How Did It Get This Way?



Remember this Equation

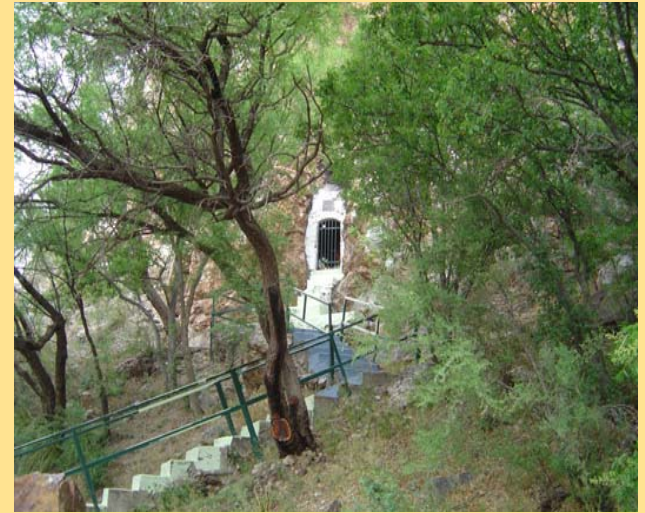
PERCEPTION = REALITY

$$P = R$$



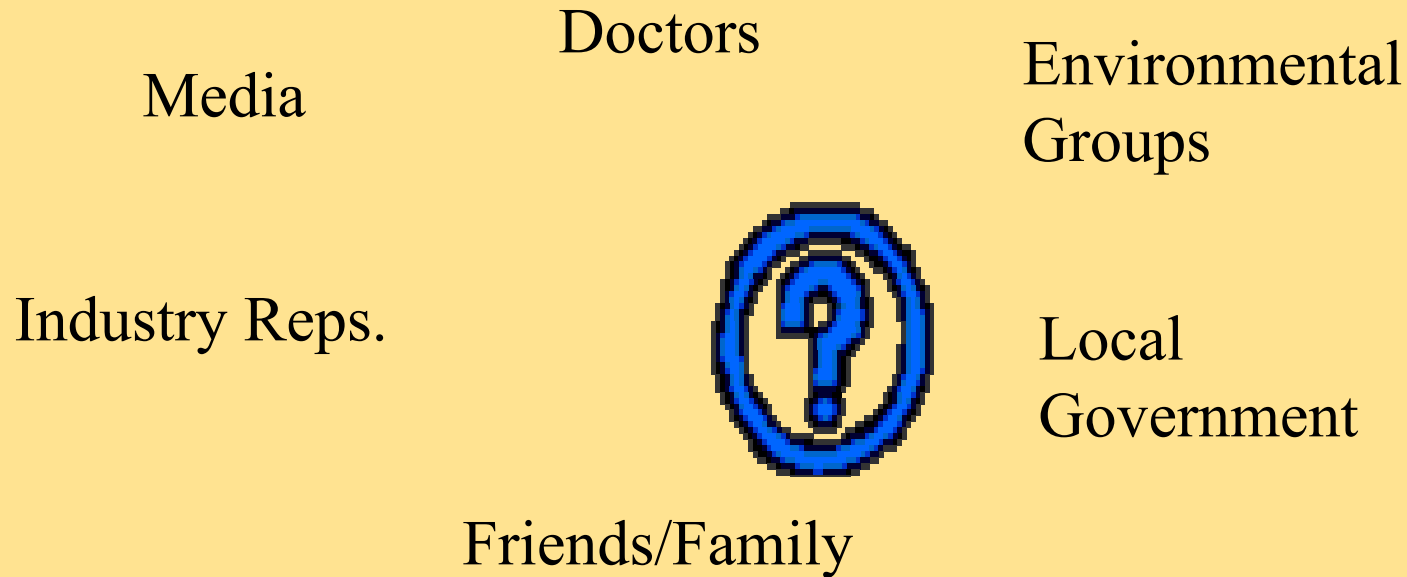
What Gets People's Attention?

- Close to residential communities or disruption of community “routine”
- Close to important scenic or cultural sites
- Perceptions of risk
- Waste – solutions for non-existent problems
- Active presence of organized environmental groups and community
- History of poor community outreach

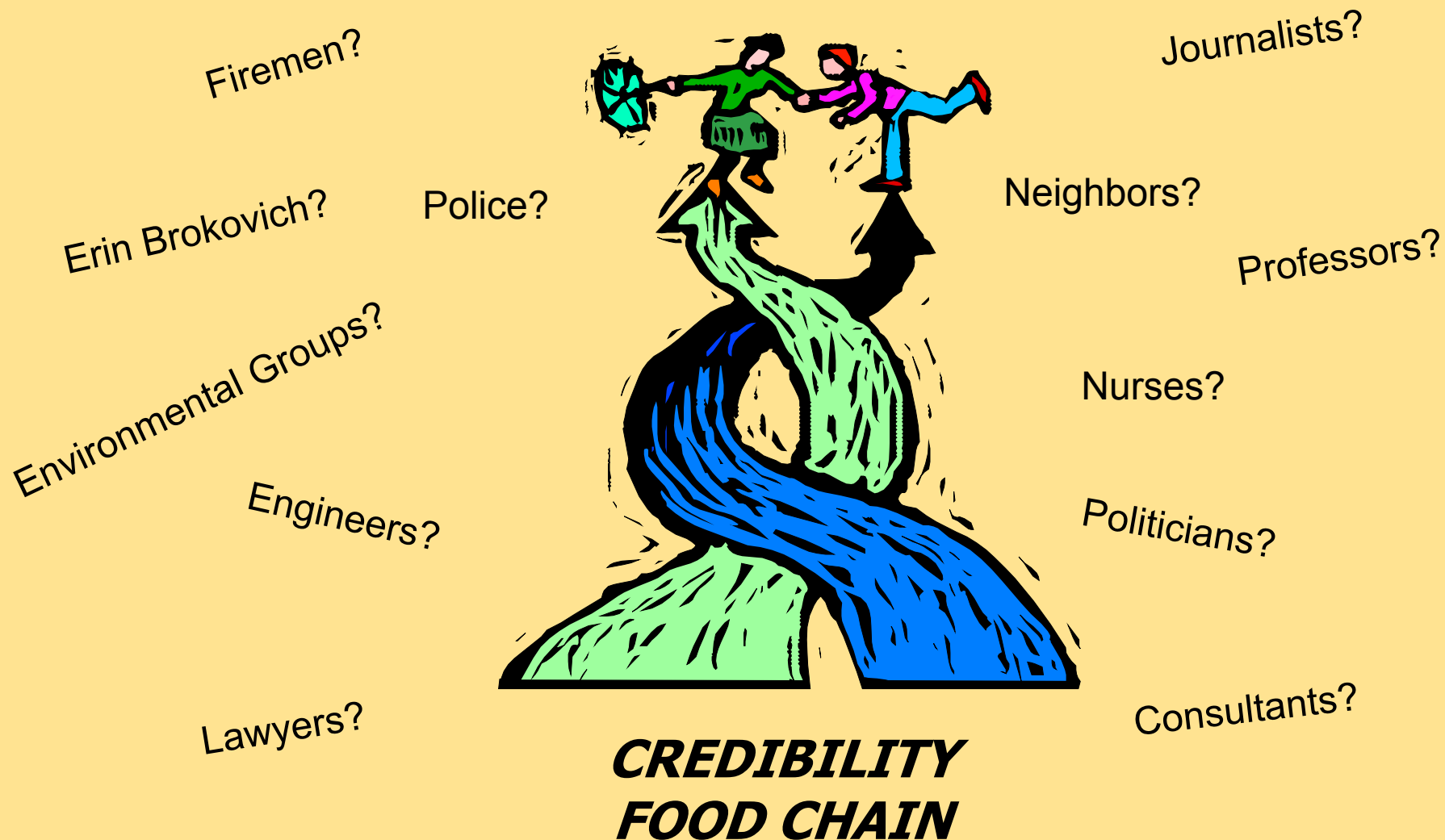


How do People Think?

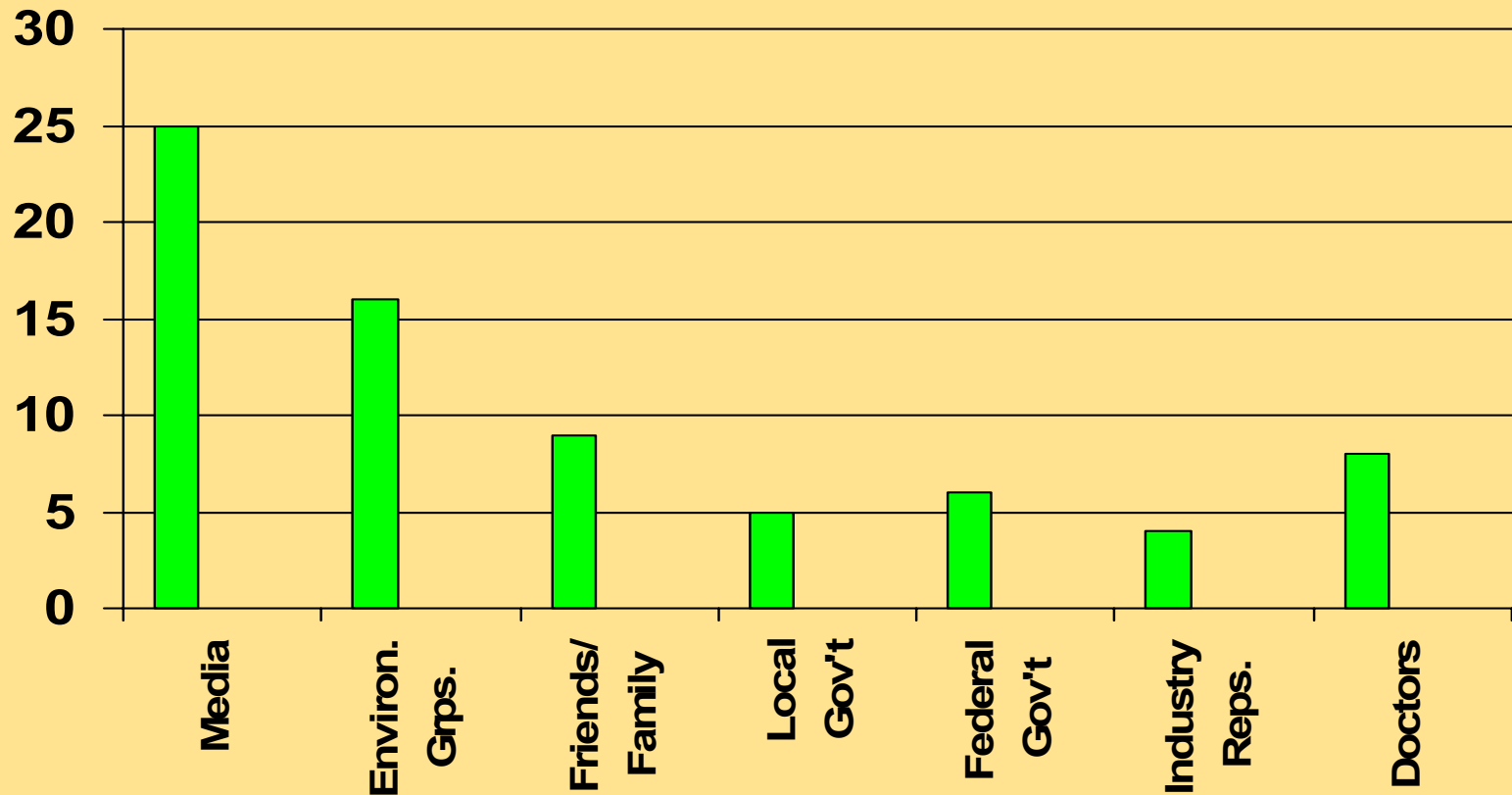
- Where do people get their information?
- Who do they trust?
- Who do they believe has the most information?



Who is Most Credible?

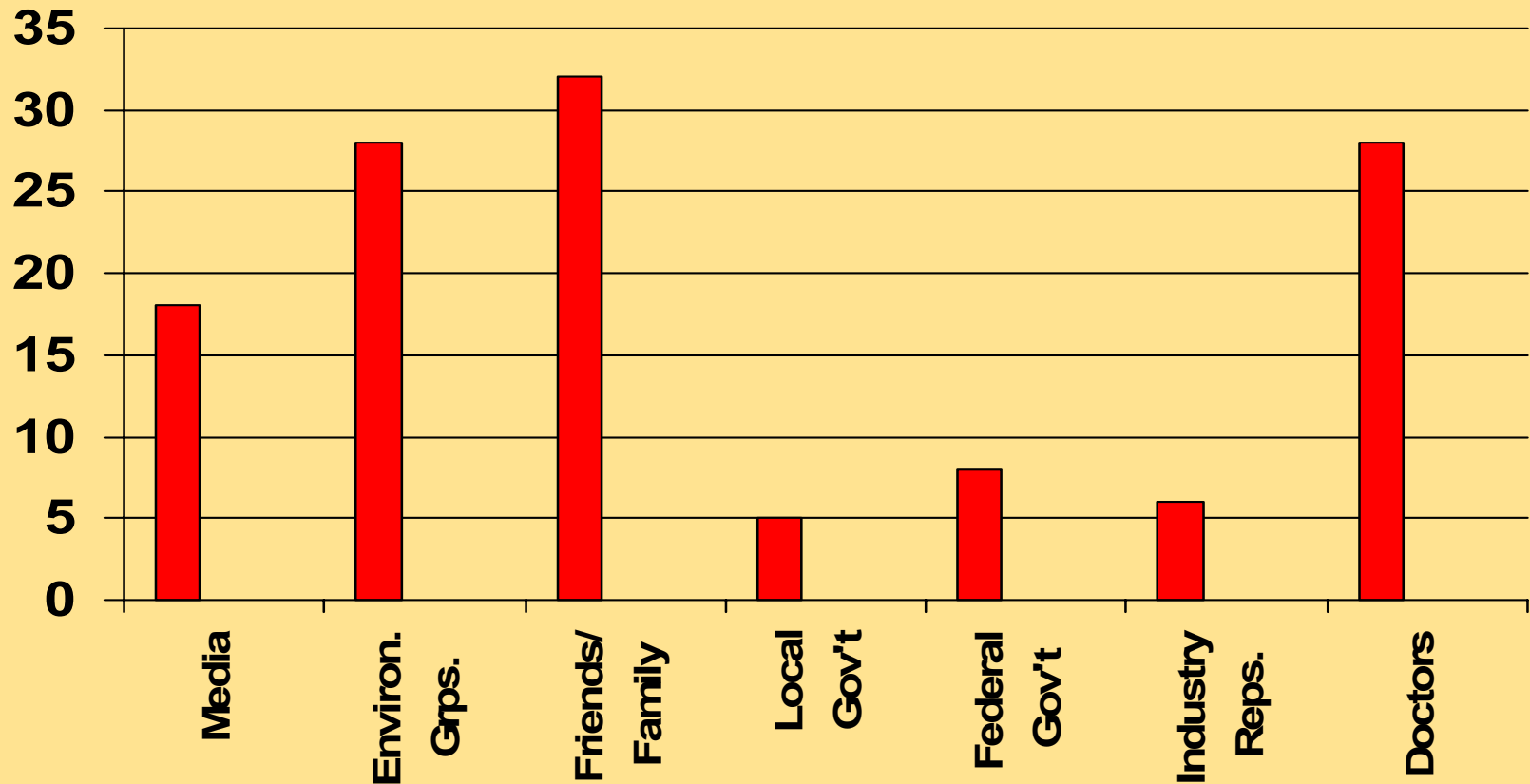


Where do you get your information?



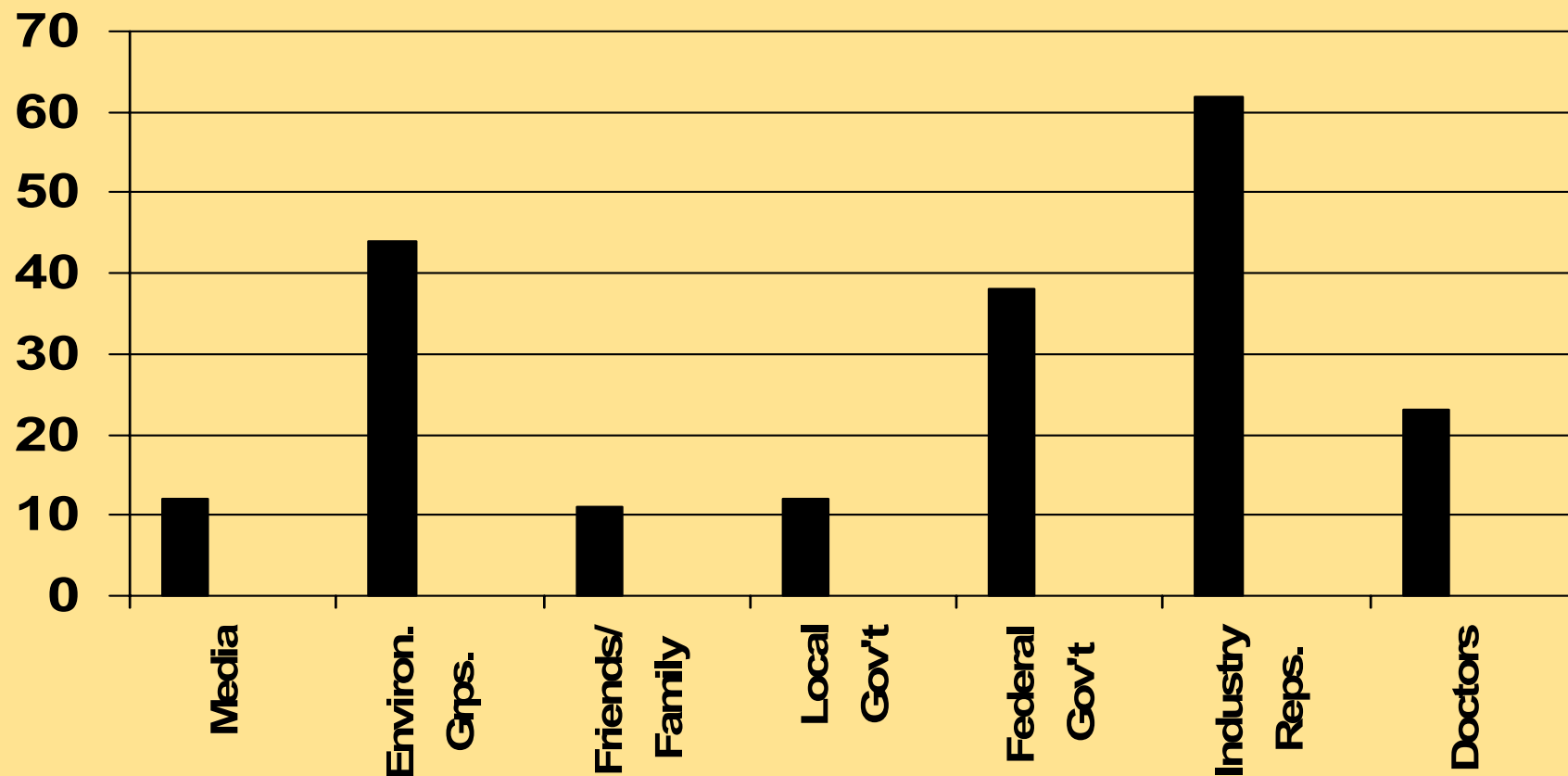
Source: Six Community Survey, Columbia University, 1992

Who do you trust?



Source: Six Community Survey, Columbia University, 1992

Who do you believe *has* the most information?



Source: Six Community Survey, Columbia University, 1992

Different Kinds of Audience Concerns

- Technical: Matters of health, environment, and safety; hazard
- Personal: Overall emotional and psychological well-being, a feeling of being treated with respect as a valued participant in a relationship
- Informational: Desire for full and clear understanding of available information

What does it cost when you add up the costs?

- Citizen complaints
- Negative media coverage
- Increased liability
- Delays in permitting process & construction
- Stricter environmental regulation
- Low employee morale – “dread” to engage community
- Public learns about risks but not benefits
- Loss of trust and credibility





How To Fix It

Why Communicate at all?

- Media coverage
- Regulations
- Public scrutiny
- Department or Agency image
- Risk perception
- Community Goodwill
- Time is Money



*“People have a right to information
that affects their lives”*



An Equation

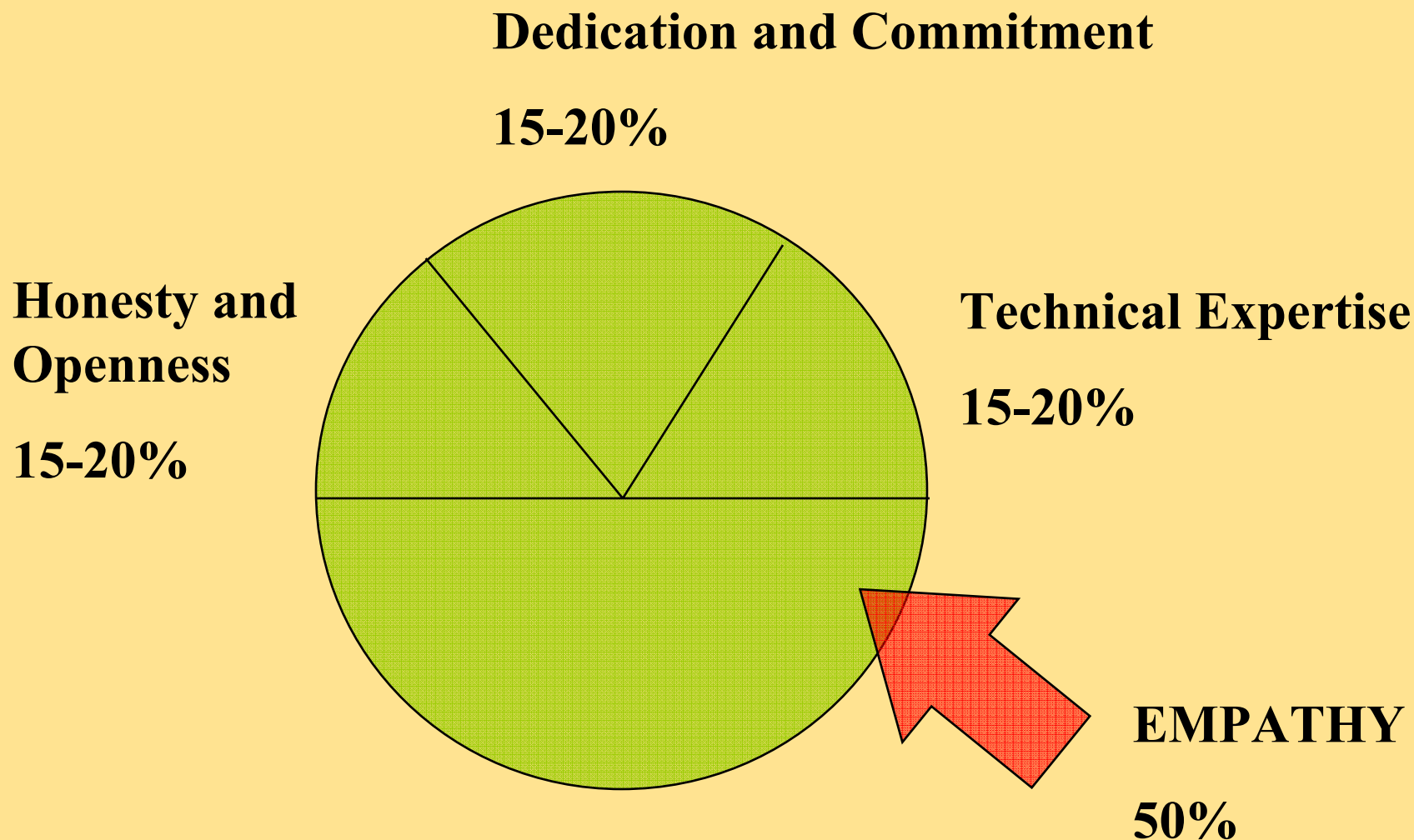
$$\text{RISK} = \text{HAZARD} + \text{OUTRAGE}$$

$$\mathbf{R = H + O \quad or}$$

$$\mathbf{R = f(H,O)} \quad (\text{for the engineers})$$

Courtesy of Peter Sandman

What Makes a Source Credible?





The new style: Open and honest two-way communication

- Acknowledge and understand the concerns of the public – all the public
- Get information out early and often
- Clearly communicate risks
- Identify the sources of outrage
- Focus on long-term relationships
- Develop a communication strategy which encourages joint fact-finding
- Be honest, accept responsibility, and share power

Different Kinds of Audience Concerns

- Technical: Matters of health, environment, and safety; hazard
- Personal: Overall emotional and psychological well-being, a feeling of being treated with respect as a valued participant in a relationship
- Informational: Desire for full and clear understanding of available information



Protect and Enhance Your Credibility

- Be honest and accurate.
- Never say, “No comment” or “Its too technical.”
- Clarify the distinction between your opinion and scientific fact.
- Avoid extreme statements and extreme behavior.
- Be consistent.
- Follow through on commitments.
- Apply lessons learned – especially in the same community!

Ways to Establish Trust

- Endorsements from credible third party sources
 - Doctors
 - Environmental Groups
 - Friends & Neighbors
- Demonstrations of trustworthy characteristics (empathy, honesty, competence, dedication)
- Organizational consistency and accessibility (solid track record)





How to Respond to Public Outrage

- Don't confuse the hazard with the outrage
- Identify ways to reduce the hazard – and the outrage
- When communicating in person or in writing, respond to people's outrage before trying to explain what you're doing to reduce the hazard
- Provide opportunities for the public to participate in the process
- Follow through on what you've promised



SR 82 Rock Fall Project

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

■ Don't Under Invest in Communications

- Scoping meetings or initial studies are not enough
- Engage in regular two way communication
 - Quarterly or Semi-Annual Meetings
 - Communicate with the Community Early & Often
- Train your project team on communication techniques & strategy
 - Help those introverted scientists & engineers
- Understand the public's interests, fears & concerns
- Allow people to vent – outrage is legitimate
- Use your on the ground resources (Maintenance Crews)



Lessons Learned

■ Get to Know Your Project Community

- Get out in the Community
 - Local editor
 - Citizens Groups – drink lots of their coffee
 - Environmental Groups
 - The Mayor, The Chamber of Commerce

■ Understand Community Concerns

- Environmental
- Social
- Public Safety
- Economic



Lessons Learned

■ Involve the Community in the Project

- Study Team
- Construction pre-bid and contractor communications
 - Make sure contractors don't blow it
 - Integrate special conditions in the contract
- Construction Monitoring
 - To make sure contractors don't blow it
- Again – Use your on the ground resources (Maintenance Crews)
 - They are trusted members of the community



SR 82 Study Team

- Dennis Alvarez
- Mark Dunbar
- Bruce Purrier
- JJ Lui
- Rob Lemke
- Leslie Stafford
- George Ruffner
- Karim Dada
- Shel Clark
- Owen McCaffrey
- Melissa Maiefski
- Steve Thomas
- Annie McGreevy
- Sonia Macys
- Carlos Montriceito
- Myron Scott
- Jeff Cooper
- Kevin Dahl
- Linda Kennedy
- Bill Branan
- Fil Chavez
- Kathy Knapp
- Pat Higgins



Lessons Learned

■ Follow Up!

- Maintain relationships
- Share your experiences and resources with fellow engineers & staff
 - Be proactive
 - Share your knowledge about community sensitivity
 - Hwy 83
 - SR 82 Santa Cruz River Bridge
- Again - use your on the ground resources (Maintenance Crews)

At the End of the Day...When the Lessons Learned are Applied

- What you say matters.
- Your actions and your impacts on the Community will be remembered
- Doing it right will make the next project easier





Last Words:

“Its name is Public Opinion. It is held in reverence. It settles everything. Some think it is the voice of God.”

Mark Twain from Europe and Elsewhere